

NICHOLAS MACHIAVEL

Secretary of FLORENCE,

His Testimony against the Pope, and his
Clergy

ALSO,

His Prophecie, that all Reformations that shall
have any mixture of that sort of Men,
the Clergy in it, shall come
to nought.

Published in the Year 1537.

Re-printed in the Year 1689.

T H E
P U B L I S H E R

Or Translator of *Nicholas Machiavels* whole works
out of *Italian*, faithfully into *English* ;

To the READER,
Concerning the following Letter of *Nicholas Ma-*
chiavels in Vindication of Himself, and the
Aspersions put by some on his
Writings.

Courteous Reader,

IT hath been usual with most of those who have Translated this Author into any Language, to spend much of their Time and Paper in Taxing his Impieties, and confuting his errors and false principles as they are pleased to call them, if upon perusal of his Writings I had found him guilty of any thing that could deceive the Simple, or prejudice the rest of Mankind, I should not have put thee to the hazard of reading him in thine own Language ; but rather have suffered him still to sleep in the obscurity of his own, than endanger the World; but being very well assured of the contrary, and that the Age will rather receive advantage than damage by this publication, I did yet think that it was fit to say something in a Preface, to vindicate our Author from those Slanders which Priests and other byass'd Pens have laid upon him ; but still I thought, that it might prove a bold
and

The Preface to the Reader.

and presumptuous undertaking, and might excite laughter, for a person of my small Parts and Abilities, to Apologize for one of the greatest Wits and profoundest Judgements that ever lived amongst the Moderns: In this perplexity, I had the good fortune to meet with this Letter of his own writing; which hath delivered me from those scruples, and furnished me with an opportunity of justifying this great Person by his own Pen. Receive then this choice Piece with benignity, it hath never before been published in any Language, but lurked for above 80. years in the private Cabinets of his own Kindred, and the Descendants of his own admirers in Florence, till in the beginning of the Pontificat of Urbane the 8th. it was procured by the Jesuits and other busie bodies, and brought to Rome with an intention to divert that wise Pope from his design of making one of Nicholas Machiavels Name and Family Cardinal, as (notwithstanding all their opposition) he did, not long after. When it was gotten into that City, it wanted not those who had the judgement and curiosity to copy it, and so at length came to enjoy that priviledge which all rare pieces (even the sharpest Lybels and Pasquils) challenge in that Court, which is to be sold to Strangers, one of which being a Gentleman of this Countrey brought it over with him at his return from thence in the year 1645, and having translated it into English, did communicate it to diverse of his Friends, and by means of some of them, it hath been my good fortune to be capable of making thee a present of it, and let it serve as an Apology for our Author and his Writings, if thou thinkest

The Preface to the Reader.

thinkest he need any. I must confess I believe his works require little, but rather praise and admiration; yet I wish I could as well justify one undertaking of his not long after the writing of this Letter; for we find in the Story of those times, that in the Month of August following, in the same year 1537. this Nicolo Machiavelli (except there were another of his name) was committed prisoner to the Bargello, amongst those who were taken in Arms against Cosimo at the Castle of Montemurli, notwithstanding all his complements in this Letter to that Prince, and professed obligations to him; if this be so, we must impute it to his too great zeal, to concur with the desires of the universality at that time, in restoring the Liberty of their Countrey, which hath so far dazeld the judgements even of great and wise Men, that thou seest many grave Authors amongst the Ancients have even commended and deified the ingratitude and treachery of Brutus and Cassius. But certainly this crime of his would have been much more unpardonable, if he had lived to see his own Prophesie fulfilled in the Persons and Descendants of this great Cosimo, for there was never any succession of Princes since the World began, in which all the Royal Virtues and Qualities necessary to those who rule over Men, were more eminently perspicuous than in every individual of this line; so that those people have as little cause as ever any had to lament the change of their Government; their great Dukes having been truly Fathers of their Country, and treated their Subjects like Children, though their power be above all limitation, above all fundamental Laws; but they having no
Law,

The Preface to the Reader.

Law, are a Law to themselves. I cannot chuse but instance in some few of their Benefits to their people, first the making the River Arno Navigable from Pisa to Florence in a year of Dearth, that so the poor might be set on work and have Bread, and the Traffick of both Cities infinitely facilitated, their making at their own charge a Canal from Livorne to Pisa, their erecting at Pisa a famous University; paying the Professors who are eminent for Learning, and discharging all other incidencies out of their own Revenue, besides the raising stately Buildings for Schools and Libraries, their founding a renowned Order of Knighthood, and keeping the Chapter in the same City; and ordering a considerable number of Knights constantly to reside there, both which intended and performed by them, to encrease the concourse, and restore the wealth to the once opulent Inhabitants of that place. Their new Building, fortifying and enfranchizing Livorne, that even by the abolishing their own Customs they might enrich their Subjects, and make that Port (as it now is) the Magazine of all the Levant Trade. And lastly, Their not having in 140 years ever levied any new Tax upon their people, excepting in the year 1642. to defend the Liberties of Italy against the Barbarians. These things would merit a Panegyrick if either my parts, or this short Advertisement would admit it, I shall conclude then after I have born a just and dutiful testimony to the merits of the Prince who now governs that State, in whom (if all the Princely virtues and endowments should be lost) they might be found and restored again

The Preface to the Reader.

to the world: As some ingenious Artists in the last Age, retrieved the Art of Sculpture by certain bas relievos remaining on some Pillars and Walls at Rome, The Prudence, Magnanimity, Charity, Liberality, and above all the humanity, courtesie, and affability of the Prince, though they exceed my expressions, yet they are sufficiently known, not only to his Subjects (the constant objects of his care and goodness) but even to all Strangers, more particularly to our Nation, he having undertaken a troublesome Journey to visit this Kingdom, and to make it witness and partaker of his transcendent generosity and bounty, which he hath continued ever since, as can be testified by all who have had the honour to wait upon him in his own Country, or the good fortune but to see him in ours. I my self who have been so happy to be admitted into his presence, and have been honoured since in having his Highness my customer for many choice Books to encrease (not his knowledge, for that is beyond receiving any addition by Books) but his curiosity and his Library, do think my self bound in Duty to take this poor opportunity of testifying my gratitude and devotion to this excellent Prince. As to this Letter I have nothing more to say, but that thou mayest see how right this Author was set in Principles of Religion, before he could have the information, which we have had since from the Pens of most Learned and Rational Controversists in those points, and therefore thou mayest admire the sagacity of his

Judgement

The Preface to the Reader.

Judgement. Read him then , and serve G O D ;
thy King , and thy Country , with the Knowledge he
will teach thee. Farewel.

NICHOLAS

NICHOLAS MACHIAVELS

Letter to

ZANOBIUS BUONDELMONTIUS,

In Vindication of himself and his Writings.

*****THE Discourse we had lately (dear Zeno-
T bio) in the delightful Gardens of our old
deceased Friend *Cosimo Rucellai*, and the
pressing importunity of *Guilio Silviani*,
that I would use some means to wipe off the many
Aspersions cast upon my Writings, gives you
the present trouble of reading this Letter, and
me the pleasure of writing it; which last would
be infinitely greater, if I were not at this day too
old, and too inconsiderable, and by the change of
our Government wholly incapable of perform-
ing, either with my Brain or my Hand, any fur-
ther service to my Country; for it hath ever been
my opinion, that whosoever goes about to make
Men publickly acquainted with his Actions, or
Apologize to the World for Imputations laid
upon him, cannot be excused from vanity and
impertinence, except his Parts and Opportuni-
ties be such, as may enable him to be instrumen-
tal for the good of others, and that he cannot at-
A chieve

chieve that excellent end , without justifying himself from having any indirect and base ones, and procureing trust from Men, by clearing the repute of his Justice and Integrity to them. But although this be far from my case ; yet I have yeelded (you see) to the entreaty of *Guilio* and the rest of that Company, not only because I am sufficiently (both by the restraint of our Press, and the discretion of the person I write to) assured that this Letter will never be made publick ; but for that I esteem it a duty to clear that excellent Society, from the Scandal of having so dangerous and pernicious a Person to be a Member of their Conversation; for by reason of my Age, and since the loss of our Liberty , and my Sufferings under that Monster of Lust and Cruelty *Alexander de Medeci*, let over us by the Divine vengeance for our sins, I can be capable of no other Design or Enjoyment, than to delight and be delighted in the company of so many Choile and Virtuous Persons, who now assemble themselves with all security, under the Happy and Hopeful Reign of our new Prince, *Cosimo* ; And we may say , that though our Common-wealth be not restored, our Slavery is at an end, and that he coming in by our own choice, may prove (if I have as good skill in prophesying as I have had formerly) Ancestor to many renowned Princes, who will govern this State in great Quietness, and with great Clemency ; so that our Posterity is like to enjoy ease and
Security

Security, though not that Greatness, Wealth, and Glory, by which our City hath for some years past (even in the most factious and tumultuous times of our Democracie) given Law to Italy, and bridled the Ambition of Forreign Princes. But, that I may avoid the Lequacity incident to old Men, I will come to the business. If I remember well, the exceptions that are taken to these poor things I have published, are reducible to three;

First, *That in all my Writings, I insinuate my great Affection to the Democrical Government, even so much as to undervalue that of Monarchy in respect of it, which last I do, not obscurely in many passages, Teach, and as it were, Perswade the People to throw off.*

Next, *That in some places I Vent very great Impieties, slighting and velifying the Church, as Author of all the misgovernment in the World, and by such contempt make way for Atheism and profaneness.*

And lastly, *That in my book of the Prince, I teach Monarchs all the execrable Villanies that can be invented, and instruct them how to break Faith, and to oppress and enslave their Subjects.*

I shall answer something to every one of these; and that I may observe a right Method, will begin with the first;

Having lived in an Age when our poor Country

trety and Government have suffered more changes and revolutions, than ever did perhaps befall any People in so short a time, and having had till the taking of *Florence*, my share in the managing of Affairs, during almost all these Alterations; sometimes in the quality of Secretary of our City, and sometimes employed in *Embassages* abroad; I set my self to read the History of Ancient and Modern times, that I might by that means find out whether there had not been in all Ages the like Vicissitudes and Accidents in State Affairs, and to search out the causes of them, and having in some sort satisfied my self therein, I could not abstain from scribbling something of the two chiet kinds of Government, *Monarchy* and *Democracy*, of which all other forms are but mixtures, and since neither my Parts nor Learning could arrive to follow the steps of the *Ancients*, by writing according to Method and Art, as *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and many others have done upon this subject; I did content my self to make slight observations upon both, by giving a bare character of a *Prince*, as to the *Monarchical* frame, and as to the Popular chusing the perfectest and most successful of all Governments of that kind upon Earth, and in my Discourses upon it, following the order of my Author, without ever taking upon me to argue problematicallie, much less to dicide which of these two Governments is the best: if
from

from my way of handling matters in my discourses upon *Livy*, and from those incomparable Virtues and great Actions we read of in that *History*; and from the Observations I make, men will conclude (which is, I must confess my opinion) that the excellencie of those Counsels and Atchievements, and the improvement which Mankind, and as I may so say, Humane Nature it self obtained amongst the *Romans*, did proceed naturally from their Government; and was but a plain effect and consequence of the perfection of their Common wealth: I say if Readers will thus judge, how can I in reason be accused for that? it would become those who lay this blame upon me to undeceive them whom my Papers have mis-led, and to shew the World to what other causes we may impute those admirable effects, those Heroick qualities and performances, that integrity and purity of manners, that scorning of riches and life it self, when the publick was concerned: If they please to do this, they will oblige my Readers, who will owe to such the rectifying their Judgements, and not at all offend me, who have reasoned this matter impartially and without passion; nor have positively affirmed any thing. But, what if this part of my accusation had been true? Why should I be condemned of Heresie, or indiscretion of preferring a *Common wealth* before a *Monarchy*? Was I not Born, Bred, and imployed in

a City, which being at the time I write, under that form of Government, did owe all wealth and greatness, and all prosperity to it? If I had not very designedly avoided all dogmaticalness in my observations (being not willing to imitate young Scholars in their Declamations) I might easily have concluded from the premisses I lay down, that a *Democracy* founded upon good *Orders* is the best and most excellent *Government*, and this without the least fear of confutation, for I firmly believe, that there are none but Flatterers and Sophisters would oppose me, such as will test *Aristotle*, and even *Plato* himself, to make them write for *Monarchy*, by misapplying some loose passages in those great Authors; nay, will tell their Readers, that what is most like the Government of the World by GOD is the best, which wholly depends upon his absolute Power; to make this comparilon, run with four feet, these Sycophants must give the poor Prince they intend to Deifie, a better and superiour Nature to Humanity, must Creat a necessary dependance of all Creatures upon him, must endue him with infinite wisdom and goodness, and even with Omnipotency it self. It will be hard for any man to be mis-led in this Argument by proofs wrested from *Theology*, since whosoever reads attentively the *Historical* part of the *Old Testament*, shall find that GOD himself never made but one Government for Men, that this Govern-

Government was a *Common wealth* (wherein the *Sanchadrim* or *Senate*, and the *Congregation* or *popular Assembly* had their share) and that he manifested his high displeasure when the rebellious people would turn it into a *Monarchy*; but that I may not stricke upon the rock I profess to shun, I shall pass to that which is fit indeed to be wip'd off, and which if it were true, would not only justly expose me to the hatred and vengeance of GOD, and all good men, but even destroy the design and purpose of all my Writings, which is to treat in some sort (as well as one of my small parts can hope to do) of the *Politleks*. And how can any man pretend to write concerning *Policy*, who destroys the most essential part of it, which is obedience to all Governments? It will be very easie then for *Guilio Salviati*, or any other Member of our Society, to believe the Protestation I make, that the animating of private Men either directly or indirectly to disobey, much less to shake off, any government how dispotical soever, was never in my Thoughts or Writings; those who are unwilling to give credit to this, may take the pains to assign in any of my Books, the passages they imagine to tend that way, (for I can think of none my self) that so I may give such persons more particular satisfaction; I must confess I have a discourse in one of my Books, to encourage the *Italian Nation*, to assume their ancient valour.

valour, and to expel the *Barbarians*, meaning (as the ancient *Romans* used the word) all Strangers from amongst us; but that was before the *Kings of Spain* had quiet possession of the Kingdom of *Naples*, or the *Emperour* of the *Dutchy of Milan*; so that I could not be interpreted to mean that the people of those two Dominions should be stir'd up to shake off their Princes, because they were Forreigners, since at that time *Lodovic Sforza* was in possession of the one, and *K. Frederick* restored to the other, both *Natives of Italy*; but my design was to exhort our Countrey-men not to suffer this *Province* to be the Scene of the Arms and Ambition of *Charles the 18h.* or *K. Lewis* his Successor, who when they had a mind to renew the old Title of the House of *Anjou* to the Kingdom of *Naples*, came with such force into *Italy*, that not only our goods were plundered, and our Lands wasted, but even the liberty of our Cities and Governments endangered, but to unite and oppose them, and to keep this *Province* in the hands of *Princes* of our own Nation, this my intention is so visible in the Chapter it self, that I need but refer you to it. Yet that I may not answer this imputation barely by denying, I shall assert in this place what my principles are in that which the World calls *Rebellion*, which I believe to be not only rising in Arms against any government we live under, but to acknowledge that word to extend to all

clan-

Elandestine Conspiracies too, by which the p^{ce} and quiet of any Countrey may be interrupted, and by consequence the Lives and Estates of innocent Persons endangered. *Rebellion* then so described, I hold to be the greatest crime that can be committed amongst men, both against Policy, Morality, and *in foro Conscientie*; but notwithstanding all this, it is an offence which will be committed whilst the World lasts, as often as Princes tyrannize, and by enslaving and oppressing their Subjects, make Magistracy, which was intended for the benefit of Mankind, prove a Plague and Destruction to it; for let the terrour and the guilt be never so great, it is impossible that Humane Nature, which consists of Passion as well as Virtue can support with patience and submission the greatest cruelty and injustice, when ever either the weakness of their Princes, the unanimity of the People, or any other favourable accident, shall give them reasonable hopes to mend their condition, and provide better for their own interest by insurrection. So that Princes and States ought in the Conduct of their Affairs, not only to consider what their people are bound to submit to; if they were inspired from Heaven, or were all Moral Philosophers; but to weigh likewise what is probable *de facto* to fall out, in this corrupt age of the World, and to reflect upon those dangerous Tumults, which have happened frequently not

B

only

only upon oppression, but even by reason of Malverlation, and how some *Monarchies* have been wholly subverted and changed into *Democracies* by the Tyranny of the Princes; as we see (to say nothing of *Rome*) the powerful *Cantons* of *Switzerland* brought by that means a little before the last age, to a considerable *Commonwealth*, courted and sought by all the *Potents* in *Christendom*. If Princes will seriously consider this, I make no question but they will Rule with Clemency and Moderation, and return to that excellent Maxim of the Ancients (almost exploded in this Age) that the interest of *Kings*, and of their People is the same, which truth it hath been the whole design of my Writings to convince them of.

I am charged then, in the second place, with *Impiety*, and villifying the Church, and so to make way for *Atheism*. I do not deny but that I have frequently in my Writings laid the blame upon the Church of *Rome*, not only for all the misgovernment of *Christendom*; but even for the Depravation and almost total Destruction of *Christian Religion* it self in this Province; But that this Discourse of mine doth, or can tend to teach Men impiety, or to make way for *Atheism*, I peremptorily deny: And although for proof of my innocence herein, I need not but refer you and all others to my Papers themselves, as they are now published (where you will find all my
Rea-

Reasons drawn from Experience, and frequent Examples cited, which is ever my way of Arguing) yet since I am put upon it, I shall in a few lines make that matter possibly a little clearer; and shall first make protestation, That as I do undoubtedly hope, by the Merits of CHRIST, and by Faith in Him, to attain Eternal Salvation; so I do firmly believe the Christian Profession to be the only true Religion now in the World: Next, I am fully perswaded, that all Divine Verities, which GOD then designed to teach the World, are contained in the Books of holy Scripture, as they are now extant and received amongst us. From them I understand that GOD created Man in purity and innocence, and that the first of that Species, by their frailty, lost at once their integrity and their Paradise, and intail'd sin and misery upon their Posterity; that Almighty GOD to repair this loss, did out of his infinite Mercy, and with unparallel'd grace and goodness, send his only begotten Son into the World, to teach us new truths, to be a perfect example of virtue, goodness, and obedience, to restore true Religion, degenerated amongst the Jews into Superstition, Formality, and Hypocrisie, to die for the Salvation of Mankind; and in fine, to give to us the holy Spirit, to regenerate our Hearts, support our Faith, and lead us into all truth. Now if it shall appear that as the lusts of our first Parents

did at that time disappoint the good intention of GOD, in making a pure World, and brought in by their disobedience the corruptions that are now in it. So that since likewise the Bishops of *Rome*, by their insatiable ambition and avarice, have designedly, as much as in them lyes, frustrated the Merciful Purpose He had, in the happy Restauration He intended the World by His Son, and in the renewing and reforming of Humane Nature, and have wholly detaced, and spoiled Christian Religion, and made it a Worldly and a Heathenish thing, and altogether incapable, as it is practised amongst them, either of directing the wayes of its professors to virtue and good life, or of saving their Souls hereafter. If I say, this do appear I know no reason why I for detesting thus much, and for giving warning to the World to take heed of their wayes, should be accused of Impiety or Atheism; or why his Holiness should be so enraged against the poor Inhabitants of the Valleys in *Savoy*, and against the *Albigesi* for calling him Antichrist: but to find that it is an undoubted truth, I mean that the *Popes* have corrupted Christian Religion, we need but read the *New Testament* (acknowledged by themselves to be of infallible truth) and there we shall see, that the Faith and Religion preached by Christ, and settled afterwards by his Apostles, and cultivated by their Sacred Epistles, is so different a thing from the Christianity that
is

is now profess'd and taught at Rome, that we should be convinc'd, that if those Holy Men should be sent by GOD again into the World, they would take more pains to confute this *Galilaeus*, than ever they did to preach down the Tradition of the *Pharisees*, or the Fables and Idolatry of the *Gentiles*; and would in probability suffer a new Martyrdom in that City under the Vicar of CHRIST, for the same Doctrine which once animated the Heathen Tyrants against them. Nay, we have something more to say against these sacrilegious pretenders to GODS power; for whereas all other false worshipps have been set up by some politick Legislators, for the support and preservation of Government, this false, this spurious Religion brought in upon the ruines of Christianity by the *Popes*, hath deformed the face of Government in *Europe*; destroying all the good principles, and Morality left us by the Heathen themselves; and introduced in stead thereof, Sordid, Cowardly, and impolitick Notions, whereby they have subjected Mankind, and even great *Princes* and *States*, to their own *Empire*, and never suffered any Orders or Maxims to take place where they have power that might make a Nation Wise, Honest, Great or Wealthy: This I have set down so plainly in those passages of my Book which are complained of, that I shall say nothing at all for the proof of it in this place, but refer you thither, and come to speak

a litle more particularly of my first assertion; that the *Pope* and his *Clergy* have deprvied Christian Religion. Upon this subject I could infinitely wish, new Letters begin to revive again, that some Learned Pen would employ it self, and that some person vers'd in the Chronoligy of the Church (as they call it) would deduce out of the Ecclesiastical Writers, the time and manner how these abuses crept in; and by what Arts and Steps this *Babel* that reaches at Heaven, was built by these Sons of the Earth ; but this matter as unsuitable to the brevity of a Letter, and indeed more to my small Parts and Learning, I shall not pretend to, being one who never hitherto studied or write of Theology, further than it did naturally concern the *Politicks*; therefore I shall only deal by the New Testament as I have done formerly by *Titus Livius*, that is, make observations or reflections upon it, and leave you and Mr. *Guilio*, and the rest of our Society to make the judgement, nor citing like Preachers, the Chapter or Verse; because the reading of Holy Scripture is little us'd, and indeed hardly permitted amongst us. To begin at the top, I would have any reasonable man tell me, whence this unmeasureable power, long claim'd, and now possess'd by the *Bishop of Rome*, is deriv'd, first of being CHRIST'S Vicar, and by that (as I may so say) pretending to a Monopoly of the Holy Spirit (which was promised and given

given to the whole Church, that is, to the Elect, or Saints) as is plain by a clause in *St. Peters Sermon*, made the very same time that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit of GOD were first given to the Apostles, who says to the *Jews and Gentiles*, *Repent and be Baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for this promise is to you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD shall call.* Next, to judge infallibly of Divine Truth, and to forgive sins as CHRIST did. Then to be the Head of all Ecclesiastical Persons and Causes in the World; to be so far above *Kings and Princes*, as to Judge, Depose, and Deprive them, and to have an absolute Jurisdiction over all the affairs in Christendom, *in Ordine ad Spiritualia*; yet all this the Canonists allow him, and he makes no scruple to assume, whilst it is plain that in the whole *New Testament* there is no description made of such an Officer to be at any time in the Church, except it be in the Prophecy of the *Apocalyps*, or in one of *St. Paul's Epistles*, where he sayes, *Who it is that shall sit in the Temple of GOD. shewing himself that he is GOD.* CHRIST tells us, *his Kingdom is not of this World*; And, if any will be the greatest amongst his Disciples, that he must be servant to the rest; which shews that his Followers were to be great in Sanctity and Humility, and not in worldly power.

The

The Apostle *Paul* writing to the Christians of those times, almost in every Epistle commands them *to be obedient to the Higher Powers, or Magistrates set over them*; and St. Peter himself (from whom this extravagant Empire is pretended to be derived) in his first Epistle, bids us *submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the LORDS sake, whether it be to the King, or, &c.* and this is enjoyn'd although it is plain, that they who govern'd the World in those days, were both Heathens, Tyrants, and Usurpers, and in this submission there is no exception or *proviso* for Ecclesiastical immunity. The practice as well as precepts of those Holy Men shews plainly that they had no intention to leave Successors, who should deprive Hereditary Princes from their right of Reigning for differing in Religion, who without all doubt are by the appointment of the Apostle, and by the principles of Christianity, to be obeyed and submitted to (in things wherein the fundamental Laws of the Government give them power) though they were *Jews* or *Gentiles*. If I should tell you by what Texts in Scripture the *Popes* claim the powers before mentioned, it would stir you up to laughter, and prove too light for so serious a matter; yet because possibly you have never heard so much of this subject before, I shall instance in a few: They tell you therefore that the Jurisdiction they pretend over the Church, and the power of pardoning sins,

c. me

comes from CHRIST to St. Peter, and, from him to them. *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, I will give thee the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, &c.* From these two Texts ridiculously applyed, comes this great Tree which hath with its branches over spread the whole Earth, and kill'd all the good and wholsome Plants growing upon it; The first Text will never by any man of sense be understood to say more, than that the Preaching, Suffering, and Ministry of Peter, was like to be a great foundation and Pillar of the Doctrine of Christ; the other Text (as also another spoken by our Saviour, to all his Apostles, *whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained*) are all by the primitive Fathers interpreted in this manner, wheresoever you shall effectually preach the Gospel, you shall carry with you Grace, and Remission of sins to them which shall follow your instructions; but the people who shall not have these joyful Tidings communicated by you to them, shall remain in darkness, and in their sins. But if any will contest, that by some of these last Texts, that Evangelical Excommunication, which was afterwards brought into the Church by the Apostles, was here presignified by our great Master, how
unlike

unlike were those censures to those now thunder-
ed out (as he calls it) by the Pope ? these were
for edification, and not destruction, to afflict
the flesh for the salvation of the Soul, that the
Apostolical Ordinance was pronounced for some
notorious Scandal or Apostacy from the Faith,
and first decreed by the Church; that is, the
whole Congregation present, and then denoun-
ced by the Pastor, and reached only to debar
such persons from partaking of the Communi-
on or fellowship of that Church, till Repen-
tance should re-admit him, but was followed by
no other prosecution or chastisement, as is now
practised. But suppose all these Texts had been
as they would have them, how does this make
for the Successors of St. Peter or the rest? Or how
can this prove the Bishops of Rome to have right
to such Succession? But I make haste from this
subject, and shal urge but one Text more;
which is, *the spiritual man judgeth all men, but is
himself judged of none*; from whence is inferred by
the Canonists, that first, the Pope is the Spiritual
man; and then that he is to be Judge of all the
World; and last, that he is never to be lyable to
any judgment himself; whereas it is obvious to
the meanest understanding: St. Paul in this text
means to distinguish between a person inspired
with the Spirit of God, and remaining one in the
state of Nature, which latter he sayes cannot
judge of those Heavenly gifts and graces, as he
explains

explains himself when he says , *The natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit , because they are foolishness unto him.* To take my leave of this matter wholly out of the way of my Studies , I shall beg of you *Zenobio* and of *Guilio* , and the rest of our Society to read over carefully the *New Testament* , and then to see what ground there is for *Purgatory* (by which all the wealth and greatness hath accrew'd to these men) what colour for the Idolatrous worship of Saints, and their Images , and particularly for speaking in their hymes and prayers to a piece of wood (the Cross I mean (*Salve Lignum* , &c. and then *fac nos dignos beneficiorum Christi* , as you may read in that Office, what colour, or rather what excuse for that horrid unchristian , and barbarous Engine called the *Inquisition* , brought in by the Command and Authority of the *Pope* , the inventor of which , *Peter* a Dominican Fryer having been slain amongst the *Albigesi* , as he well deserved, is now Cannoniz'd for a Saint , and stil'd , *San Pietro Martine* : In the dreadful Prisons of this *Inquisition* , many faithful and pious Christians (to say nothing of honest Moral *Moors* or *Mabometans*) are tormented and famish'd, or, if they out live their sufferings burnt publickly to death, and that only for differing in Religion from the *Pope* , without having any crime , or the least misdemeanor proved or alledged against them , and this is inflicted
upon

upon these poor Creatures, by those who profess to believe the Scripture, which tells us, that *faith is the gift of God*, without whose special Illumination no man can obtain it; and therefore is not in reason or humanity to be punished for wanting it: And Christ himself hath so clearly decided that point in bidding us let the tares and the wheat grow together till the Harvest; that I shall never make any difficulty to call him Antichrist, who shall use the least persecution whatsoever against any differing in matters of faith from himself, whether the person so dissenting, be *Heretick, Jew, Gentile, or Mahometan*: Next I beseech you to observe in reading that Holy Book (though Christian fasts are doubtless of Divine right) what ground there is for enjoining fish to be eaten (at least flesh to be abstained from) for one third part of the year, by which they put the poor to great hardship, who not having purses to buy wholesome fish, are subjected to all the miseries and diseases incident to a bad and unhealthful dyet, whilst the rich, and chiefly themselves and their *Cardinals*, exceed *Lucullus* in their Luxury, of *Oysters, Turbats, tender Crabs, and Carpioni* brought some hundreds of miles to feed their gluttony, upon these penitential dayes of abstinence from *Beeff and Pork*, It may be it will lye in the way of those who observe this, to enquire what *St. Paul* means when he says, *That in the latter dayes some shall depart from the faith, forbidding*

forbidding to marry, and Commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving; but all these things, and many other abuses brought in by these Perverters of Christianity, will I hope e're long be enquired into by some of the Disciples of that bold Fryer, who the very same year in which I professed that the scourge of the Church was not far off, began to thunder against their Indulgencies, and since hath questioned many tenets long received and imposed upon the world. I shall conclude this discourse after I have said a word of the most Hellish of all the innovations brought in by the Popes, which is the Clergy; these are a sort of men under pretence of ministring to the people in holy things, set a part and separated from the rest of mankind (from whom they have a very distinct, and a very opposite interest) by a humane Ceremony called by a divine name; viz Ordination, these wherever they are found (with the whole body of the Monks and Fryers, who are called the regular Clergy) make a Band which may be called the *Janizaries of the Papacy*; these have been the causers of all the Solocisms and immoralities in Government, and of all the impieties and abominations in Religion, and by consequence of all the disorder, villany, and corruption we suffice under in this detestable Age; these men by the Bishop of Rome's help have crept into all the Governments

Governments in *Christendom*, where there is any mixture of *Monarchy*, and made themselves a third estate; that is, by their temporalities (which are almost a third part of all the Lands in *Europe* given them by the blind zeal, or rather folly of the *Northren* people, who over ran this part of the world) stept into the throne, and what they cannot perform by these secular helps, and by the dependancy their vassals have upon them, they fail not to claim and to usurp, and by the power they pretend to have from God and his Vicegerent at *Rome*. They exempt themselves, their Lands and Goods, from all secular jurisdiction; that is, from all Courts of Justice and Magistracy, and will be Judges in their own Causes, as in matters of tithe, &c. and not content with this, will appoint Courts of their own to decide Sovereignty in testamentary matters, and many other causes; and take upon them to be the sole punishers of many great Crimes, as Witchcraft, Sorcery, Adultery, and all uncleanness; to say nothing of the forementioned judicatory of the inquisition: in these last cases they turn the offenders over to be punish'd (when they have given Sentence) by the secular arm, so they call the Magistrate, who is blindly to execute their decrees under pain of Hell fire; as if Christian Princes and Governours were appointed only by God to be their Bravo's or Hangmen. They give protection and Sanctuary, to all execrable

execrable offenders, even to Murderers themselves, (whom God commanded to be indispensably punish'd with death) if they come within their Churches, Cloysters, or any other place, which they will please to call holy ground; and if the ordinary justice, nay, the Sovereign power, do proceed against such offenders, they thunder out their Excommunication; that is, cut off from the body of Christ, not the Prince only, but the whole Nation and People, shutting the Church doors, and commanding divine offices to cease, and sometimes even authorizing the people to rise up in Arms, and constrain their Governours to a submission, as happened to this poor City in the time of our Ancestors, when for but forbidding the servant of a poor Carmelite Fryer who had vowed poverty, and should have kept none) to go arm'd, and punishing his disobedience, with imprisonment, our whole Senate with their *Consalonier* were constrained to go to *Avignon* for absolution, and in case of refusal, had been massacred by the people. It would almost astonish a wise man to imagine how these folks should acquire an Empire so destructive to Christian Religion, and so pernicious to the interests of men, but it will not seem so miraculous to them who shall seriously consider, that the Clergy hath been for more than these thousand years upon the catch, and a form'd united Corporation against the parity of

Re-

Religion, and the interest of Mankind, and have not only wrested the Holy Scripture to their own advantage (which they have kept from the Laity in unknown languages , and by prohibiting the reading thereof) but made use likewise first of the blind devotion and ignorance of the *Goths, Vandals, Huns, &c.* and since of the ambition and avarice of Christian Princes, stirring them up one against another, and sending them upon foolish errands to the Holy Land, to lose their lives, and to leave their Dominions, in the mean time, exposed to themselves and their Complices , They have besides kept Learning and Knowledge among themselves, stifling the light of the Gospel, crying down Moral vertues as splendid sins, defacing humane policy; destroying the purity of the Christian faith and profession, and all that was virtuous, prudent, regular and orderly upon earth, so that whoever would do good, and good men service, get himself immortal honour in this life, and eternal glory in the next, would restore the good policy (I had almost said with my Author *Livy* the sanctity too) of the *Heathens*, with all their valour, and other glorious endowments; I say, whoever would do this, must make himself powerful enough to extirpate this cursed and apostate race out of the world, and that you may see this is lawful as well as necessary, I shall say but one word of their calling and original, wise

and then leave this subject. The word *Clergy*, is a term wholly unknown to the Scriptures, otherwise then in this sense; a particular People or GOD'S lot used often for the whole *Jewish Nation*, who are likewise called a Kingdom of Priests in some places. In the New Testament the word *Cleros* is taken for the true Believers, who are also called the Elect, and often the Church, which is the Assembly of the Faithful met together, as is easily seen by reading the beginning of most of *St Paul's Epistles*, where writing to the Church, or Churches he usually explains himself, *To all the Saints in Christ*: sometimes, *To all who have obtained some faith with us*; sometimes, *To all who in all places call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus, &c.* by which it appears, that neither the word *Church* nor *Clergy* was in those days ever appropriated to the *Pastors or Elders* of the flock; but did signify indifferently all the people assembled together; which is likewise the literal construction of the word *Ecclesia*, which is an assembly or meeting; in these Congregations or Churches was performed their Ordination, which properly signifies no more than a decree of such Assembly; but is particularly used for an Election of any into the Ministry. The manner was this, sometimes the Apostles themselves in their Perigrinations, and sometimes any other eminent Member of the Church, did propose to the Society (upon vacancy, or other necessity of a Pastor,

Pastor, Elder, or Deacon) some good Holy man to be Elected, which person if he had parts or gifts, such as the Church could edify by was chosen by the lifting up of hands, that is by suffrage, and oftentimes hands were laid upon him, and Prayer made for him. These men so set apart did not pretend to any consecration, or sacredness more than they had before, much less to become a distinct thing from the rest of mankind as if they had been metamorphos'd, but did attend to perform the several Functions of their calling, as prophesying; that is, Preaching the Gospel, visiting the Sick, &c. and never intermitted the ordinary business of their Trade or Profession, unless their Church or Congregation was very numerous, in which case they were maintained by alms or contribution, which was laid aside by every member, and collected the first day of the week by the Deacons, this was said to be given to the Church, and was employed by suffrage of the whole Collective Body to the poor, and to other incidencies, so far was it from Sacrilege in those days to employ Church goods to Lay uses. From these words, Church, Clergy, Ordination, Pastor, (which last hath been translated of late years Bishop) you see what conclusions these men have deduced, and how immense a structure they have raised, upon so little a foundation, and how easily it will fall to the ground, when God shall inspire Christian Princes and States to redeem his truths, and his

his poor enslaved Members out of their Churches, and to bring back again into the world, the true original Christian faith, with the Apostolical Churches, Pastors, and Ordination, so consistent with moral virtue and integrity, so helpful and conducing to the best and most prudent policy, so fitted for obedience to Magistracy and Government, all which the world hath for many years been deprived of, by the execrable and innate ill quality, which is inseparable from priest-craft, and the conjuration or spell of their new invented ordination; by which they cry with the Poet,

Jam furor humanum nostro de pectore sensum

Expulit & totum spirant præ cordia Rhæbum.

which makes them so Sacred, and Holy, that they have nothing of integrity, or indeed of humanity left in them. I hope I shall not be thought impious any longer, upon this point, I mean for vindicating Christian Religion from the assaults of these men, who having the confidence to believe, or at least profess themselves the only instruments which God hath chosen or can choose to teach and reform the world (though they have neither Moral virtues, nor Natural parts equal to other men for the most part) have by this pretence prevail'd so far upon the common sort of people, and upon some too of a better quality, that they are perswaded their salvation or eternal damnation depends upon believing or not believing of what they

I say. I would not be understood, to dissuade any from honouring the true Apostolical Teachers, when they shall be re established amongst us, or from allowing them (even of right, and not of alms or courtesie) such emoluments as may enable them cheerfully to perform the duties of their charge, to provide for their Children, and even to use hospitality as they are commanded by St: Paul. But this I will prophecy before I conclude; that if Princes shall perform this business by halves, and leave any root of this Clergy or Priestcraft, as it now is, in the ground; or if that famous Reformer, fled some years since out of *Picardy* to *Geneva*, who is of so great renown for learning and parts, and who promises us so perfect a Reformation, shall not in this model wholly extirpate this sort of men, then I say I must foretel, that as well the Magistrate as this Workman, will find themselves deceived in their expectation, and that the least *fibra* of this plant will over run again the whole Vineyard of the Lord, and turn to a diffusive Papacy in every Diocess, perhaps in every Parish: So that God in his mercy inspire them to cut out the core of the Ulcer, and the bag of this imposture, that it may never rankle or fester any more, nor break out hereafter, to diffusive new corruption and putrifaction through the body of Christ, which is his Holy Church, nor to vitiate and infect the good order and true policy of Government.

I come now to the last branch of my charge, which is, *That I teach Princes villany, and how to enslave and oppress their Subjects*, In which accusation I am dealt with as poor *Agnolo Canini* was, who as they report, being a very learned practiser of the Laws, and left the only man of this profession (one Autumn) in our City, the rest of the Advocates being fled into the countrey for fear of a contagious Disease which then reigned, was commanded by our Judges to assist with his counsel both parties, and to draw Pleas as well for the Defendant as the Plaintiff, else the Courts of Justice must have been shut up. In the same manner my accusers handle me, and make me first exhort and teach Subjects to throw off their Princes, and then to instruct Monarchs how to enslave and oppress them; but I did not expect such ingratitude from mine own Citizens, or to be served as *Moses* was, when he was upbraided for killing the *Egyptian*, by one of his own people for whose sake he had done it, whereas he believed they would have understood by that action, that he was the person whom God intended to make use in delivering them from the horrid slavery they were then under. If any man will read over my Book of the Prince with impartiality and ordinary charity, he will easily perceive, that it is not my intention therein to recommend that Government, or those men there discribed, to the world; much less to teach

teach them to trample upon good men; and all that is Sacred and Venerable upon earth, Laws, Religion, Honesty, and what not; if I have been a little too punctual in designing these Monsters, and drawn them to the life in all their lineaments and colours, I hope mankind will know them the better to avoid them, my Treatise being both a Satyr against them, and a true Character of them: I speak nothing of great and honourable Princes, as the Kings of *England, France*, and others; who have the States and Orders of their Kingdoms with excellent Laws, and Constitution, to found and maintain their Government; and who reign over the hearts as well as the persons of their subjects; I treat only of thole vermin bred out of the corruption of our own small Commonwealths and Cities, or engender'd by the ill blasts that come from *Rome, Olivaretto da Fermo, Borgia the Baglioni, the Bentivoglio*, and a hundred others, who having had neither right nor honourable means to bring them to their power, use it with more violence, rapin, and cruelty upon the poor people, than those other renowned Princes shew to the Boars, the Wolves, the Foxes, and other savage beasts which are the objects of their chase and hunting: whosoever in his Empire over men is ty'd to no other rules than those of his own will and lust, must either be a Saint to moderate his passions, or else a very

very Devil incarnate; or if he be neither of these, both his life and reign are alike to be very short; for whosoever takes upon him so execrable an employment as to rule men against the Laws of nature and of reason, must turn all topsie turvy, and never stick at any thing, for if once he halt, he will fall and never rise again: I hope after this I need say little to justify my self from the calumny of advising these Monsters to break their faith, since to keep it is to lose their Empire, faithfulness and sincerity being their mortal enemies, and *Uguccione della Faggiuola* to one who upbraided him, that he never employed honest men; answered, *Honest men will cut my throat, let the King use honest men*, meaning the King of Naples, who was established in his Throne, and had right to it. But that I may have occasion to justify my self against a little more then I am accused of, I will confess, that in a work where I desired to be a little more serious, than I was in this Book of the Prince, I did affirm, that in what way soever men defended their Country, whether by breaking or keeping their faith, it was ever well defended, not meaning in a strick moral sense, or point of honour, but explaing my self that *de facto* the infamy of the breach of word, would quickly be forgotten and pardoned by the world; which is very true. Nay, what if I had said that good succels in any interprizes (a far less

less consideration than piety to our Country) would have cancell'd the blemish of such perfidy as *Cæsar* (whom I compare to *Cataline*) us'd towards his fellow Citizens, not only not detested by posterity, but even crown'd with renown and immortal fame; insomuch as Princes to this day) as I have observed elsewhere) think it an honour to be compared to him, and the highest pitch of veneration their flatters can arrive at, is to call them by the name of one who violated his faith, and enslav'd his Country. I hope that in shewing as well these Tyrants as the poor people who are forced to live under them, their danger, that is by laying before the former, the hellish and precipitous courses they must use to maintain their power, by representing to the latter, what they must suffer, I may be instrumental, first, to deter private Citizens from attempting upon the liberties of their Country, or if they have done it, to make them lay down their ill gotten Authority; and then to warn the rest of the Nobility and people, from these factions and malignancies in their several commonwealths and Governments, which might give hope and opportunity to those who are ambitious amongst them, to aspire to an Empire over them. However it prove, I hope I am no more to be blamed for my attempt, than that excellent Physician of our Nation is, who hath lately taken so much pains to compose an excellent
Treatise,

Treatile, of that foul Disease which was, not long since, brought from the new world into these parts; wherein though he be forced to use such expressions as are almost able to nauseate his Readers, and talk of such Ulcers, Boyles, Nodes, Botches, Cankers, &c. that are scarce fit to be repeated, especially when he handles the causes of those effects, yet he did not intend to teach or exhort men to get this Disease; much less did he bring this lamentable infirmity into the world, but describes it faithfully as it is, to the end men may be deterred, and avoid the being infected with it, and may discern and cure, whenever their incontinence and folly shall procure it them. I shall say no more in this matter; but to conclude all make a protestation, that as well in this Book, as in all my other Writing, my only scope and design is to promote the interest and welfare of mankind, and the peace and quiet of the world, both which I am so vain as to believe, would be better obtained and provided for, if the principles I lay down were followed and observed by Princes and People, than they are like to be by those Maxims which are in this Age most in vogue. For my self I shall only say (and call you all to witness for the truth of it) that as by my Birth I am a Gentleman, and of a Family which hath had many *Consaloniars* of Justice in it; so I have been

Chief Magistrate.

uled

used in many employments of great trust, both in our City and abroad; and at this hour I am not in my Estate one penny the better for them all, nor should I have been, although I had never suffered any losses by the seizure of my Estate in the year 1531, for my carriage it hath ever been void of faction and contention, I never had any prejudice against the house of *Medici*, but honoured the person of all those of that Family whom I knew, and the memory of such of them as lived before me, whom I acknowledge to have been excellent Patriots and Pillars of our City and Commonwealth. During the turbulent times of *Piero*, and after his expulsion out of *Florence*, though my employments were but Ministerial, my advice was ask'd in many grave matters, which I ever delivered with impartiality and indifference, not espousing the heady opinions of any, much less their passions and animosities; I never sided with any Party further than that the Duty of my charge obliged me to serve the prevailing Party, when possess'd of the Government of our City; this I speak for those changes that happened between the flight of the said *Piero de Medici*, and the horrid Parricide committed by *Clement the 7th.* upon his indulgent Mother, joyning with his greatest enemies, and uniting himself with those who had used the most transcendent insolence to his own person, and the highest

highest violence and fury the Sun ever saw to his poor Courtiers and Subjects, and so accompain-
ed he might sheath his Sword in the bowels of his own desolate Country. At that time, and during that whole Siege, I must confess I did break the confines of my Neutrality, and not only acted as I was commanded barely, but rouz'd my self, and stir'd up others haranguing (in the Streets and places of the City) the People to defend with the last drop of their Blood, the Walls of their Country, and the Liberty of their Government; taking very hazardous Journeys to *Ferruccio*, and then into the *Mugello* and other parts, to bring in Succours and Provisions to our languishing City, and acting as a Souldier (which was a new profession to me) at the age of above sixty, when others are des-
pensed from it. For all which, I had so entire a satisfaction in my mind and conscience, that I am perswaded this cordial made me able to support the sufferings which beset me after our Catastrophe, and to rejoyce in them so far, that all the malice and cruelties of our enemies, could never draw one word from me unsutable to the honour I thought I merited, and in some sort enjoy, for being instrumental to defend (as long as it was possible) our Altars and our Hearths. But all that I have undergone, hath been abundantly recompenced to me by the favour and courtesie) of the most excellent Signior *Cosimo*,
who

who hath been pleased to offer me all the preferments the greatest ambition could aspire to, which I did not refuse out of any scruple to serve so incomparable a Prince, who see early years manifest so much courage, humanity, and prudence, and so fatherly a care of the publick good, but because I was very desirous not to accept of a charge which I was not able to perform, my years and infirmities having now brought me to a condition in which I am fitter to live in a Cloyster then a Palace, and made me good for nothing but to talk of past times, the common vice of old Age: So that I did not think it just or grateful to reward this excellent person so ill for his kindness, as to give him a useless Servant, and to fill up the place of a far better. This is all I think fit to say of this matter I chuse to address it to you *Zenobio*, for the constant friendship I have ever entertained with you & formerly with your deceased Father, the companion of my Studies, and ornament of our City. And so I bid you farewell,

The first of April, .
1537.

